

## Limo Baby by girlinstory

**Category:** IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

**Genre:** Amnesia, But also, Childhood Romance, Eddie owns a limo company, Evasive driving, M/M, Makes An Appearance - Freeform, Meet-Cute, Ramone - Freeform, Reddie, Richie is a comic, Seth Meyer's Lobby Baby, because:, borrowing from the book, but - Freeform, so does his doorman

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier

**Relationships:** Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

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**Summary:**

Richie had been waiting for half an hour. Maybe limos were always fashionably late.

# 1. Chapter 1

Richie wasn't a virgin by any stretch (ba dum tss) of the imagination, but he was going through a dry spell. More of a drought. Sometimes, he hugged the toaster to simulate human warmth.

Sex just wasn't worth it. If Richie was with a girl, there was a high probability of having to fake an orgasm, and he would be the first to admit his acting skills weren't that good. If Richie was with a guy, the paranoia wouldn't let him relax (and he really needed to be able to relax).

Coming wasn't worth it either. Not without someone to point to and say, "They like me too." Coming out in Hollywood even harder, and not just because they had walk-in closets. You try putting your dating profile in People when the nearest gays were Matt Bomer and Zachary Quinto. They were tens. Richie was like... a smudge on the paper that might be mistaken for a one.

Still, there was a part of Richie ready to blurt it out at every interview, like the l'appel du vide that made him side-eye traffic on particularly difficult Monday mornings.

Richie had been waiting for half an hour. Maybe limos were always fashionably late. He wasn't a limo kind of guy, but Bobby had ordered it for the show. InStyle was giving Richie an award, and apparently his manager felt the need to make up for the fact that he didn't actually have any style. Richie had not been allowed to dress himself. He had also been forbidden from mentioning the Tumblr account called Let's Richie Tozier Hader Some New Clothes.

For Richie, sex came up a lot (ba dum tss), but not in casual conversation. Most of his conversations were professional, for his definition of the word. He was semi-famous for his dick jokes, but the real joke was his sex life.

Richie didn't discuss sex with his bank teller or his barista, or his doorman— Except for Ramone— Ramone was like family. Even when he wasn't talking about it, Richie still felt like he was lying. Not big, elaborate lies. He didn't have a wife, or kids, or a dog.

Maybe he should get a dog.

It only took two weeks to form a habit, and Richie had been ashamed of himself for thirty years. At this point, it would take a miracle to change him.

The limo pulled up, performing a ten-point parallel park, despite its tardiness. It was oddly endearing.

"Don't anthropomorphize the cars," Richie told himself. He had been reading William Denborough's latest book, the one about the Evil Herbie. "They don't like it."

The driver's side window rolled down. An absolutely edible man stuck his head out the window.

"I'm so, so sorry, sir. My driver's wife went into labor, and he picked her up in his limo, so I had to wait for this one to get back from the Al Pacino's job, and—"

Richie raised a hand. He was just trying to slow Eds down a little, but the man cut himself off so fast that Richie worried for his tongue.

"Don't worry. I get it. I helped deliver my coworker's Lobby Baby. Met our doorman that way, and sometimes Ramone gives me his abuela's empanada's, so win-win."

Eds dimpled. "What was the first win?"

"Oh, I'm the godfather."

He slid in the back, and Eds pulled away from the curb.

"Do you have any of your own?" asked Eds.

Richie scoffed. "No way. I get the best of both worlds. No dirty diapers, but I get full access."

The dimples seemed to invert. "...To the baby?"

Richie made a face. "Ew. Not how it sounds. Babies are hilarious. I get so much material from that little fucker. I can't wait till it's old

enough to talk."

"I've never heard you make a joke about babies."

He was a fan.

Richie actually rubbed hands together in glee. Until he glanced at Edible's hands and saw his wedding ring— a perfect fit for the tanned and manicured hands, which were at ten and two, down to the minute.

He sighed. "Yeah, well, maybe someday they'll let me write my own material."

Shit. He hadn't meant to let that slip.

Eddie looked at him in the rearview mirror and squinted.

"How'd you get that burn?"

"Toaster hickey," said Richie. "So Eds—"

"Wh— How do you know my name?"

"Oh, I—" Richie blushed. "Wait. Your name?"

He glanced at the dash.

Edward Kaspbrak.

Huh.

"Oh." Eddie flicked the ID. "I forgot. Haven't actually driven in a while."

"Should I be worried?"

"Professionally, dipshit." Eddie looked like he hadn't meant for that to slip. He cleared his throat. "It's my company, but like I said—"

"Limo Baby."

"Limo Baby," Eddie agreed. "Sorry again, for being late."

"Don't worry about it. I'm not in a hurry to get—"

Richie was interrupted by the car crash.

## 2. Chapter 2

Objectively, Richie Tozier held no mystery. He was crass, filterless, and he Tweeted pictures of his food. Not even good food. Once it was a half-eaten cinnamon raisin bagel once. Untoasted. Untopped. Not even cut. Eddie had spent twenty-three minutes staring at his Instagram feed in a helpless rage.

Because Richie was a mystery for him. There was a draw. He wanted to compare it to a car crash, but while Richie is gruesome and frequently horrifying, Eddie could, in fact, look away. He just didn't want to.

Speaking of car crashes....

It was a fender-bender— technically a door bender. Benders of any kind were normal for New York City drivers, but this one was going to cost a fortune if he couldn't get the dents out with a plunger. Eddie had found a YouTube Tutorial after his first paparazzi pileup. He hadn't brought himself to watch it yet. They used the bathroom plunger.

"Fuck," said Eddie. He started checking himself for injuries, limb by limb. "Are you okay?"

Richie was rubbing his forehead. It was raw and already swelling. A cut bisected it, like crack in his goose egg, ready to hatch.

Suddenly, Eddie felt like crying. He had to watch the plunger video, and Richie was bleeding, and no one was wearing gloves. (Sometimes Eddie wished he'd been born a woman, but most of the time he knew he couldn't take it.)

"Why are they backing up?"

"Huh?" Eddie turned to look, and sure enough the cab that had dented his tank of a limo was now reversing. "Are they— Are they doing a hit and run?"

"I still don't understand why it isn't called a hit and drive," Richie

muttered, distracted, like they were carrying on an age-old argument.

"Because that's football terminology," said Eddie.

"Is it?" asked Richie. "I'm not familiar with the ball sports."

He still sounded a little concussed. Eddie started to reach for his head, despite the lack of gloves. "Hit and drive is that thing when football players just run headlong at each other, like—"

"That?" Richie asked, but it was really more of a shout, because the cab had reversed its reverse and was heading straight for them.

It was too fast. The best Eddie could do was put them in neutral, so they rolled with the force. He used that momentum to pull off a very jerky J-turn and floored it.

"What the fuck?" Richie's voice was still louder than necessary.

"I don't know!" said Eddie.

"How the fuck did you do that?"

"I'm trained in defensive driving because the kind of rich assholes who ride in limos get kidnapped a lot!"

"I'm not rich!" Richie yelled.

"I know! Stop yelling!" Eddie yelled back.

Richie took a few deep breaths— probably too deep. For diaphragmatic breathing, exhalation was more important than inhalation. Eddie was about to tell him as much, when Richie said, "I am kind of an asshole, though."

"I know," said Eddie, and for some reason, Richie grinned. It was like a time-lapse of a flower blooming. Eddie was reminded of the top comment on NatGeo's latest video. "Flowers have the greatest puberty."

A voice in his head that for once sounded nothing like his mother said, "You'll grow into your looks."

"We're still being chased."

"For a given definition of the term," Eddie agreed, chancing a glance in his rearview mirror. The cab was three cars behind them, and none of those cars were moving. As a cabbie, any kind of cabbie, Eddie resented having to be grateful for New York City traffic.

"What do we do?"

"Police?" Eddie hazarded a guess. "I think the 17th is the closest precinct."

"Is that part of your Secret Service limo training too?"

"It's called being prepared."

"Were you a Boy Scout?" It should have been a joke, but Richie didn't sound like he was joking.

A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous...

"Not me," said Eddie.

"Eddie..." Richie trailed off and stopped, as if unsure where the trail had led him.

"Yeah?" Eddie encouraged.

"I think I'm going to hurl."



### 3. Chapter 3

Richie was only taking limos from now on. They had so many places to throw up. He returned the ice bucket and climbed into the front seat with Eddie.

"Watch your elbows," said Eddie. "I think it's your girlfriend."

The limo moved forward another foot. One lane west and three cars down, so did the cab.

"I don't have a girlfriend." Richie fiddled with the radio until Eddie knocked his hands away. "Even if I did, I doubt she'd be trying to kidnap me."

"Half your jokes are about your hot girl—"

"I told you I don't write my own jokes, right?"

"Well, your fake girlfriend, then," said Eddie.

Richie squinted. Eddie was wearing a white button-up shirt with black slacks. At first, he assumed it was a uniform, but he was starting to think that was just the sort of thing Eddie wore. Eddie could be the most boring person he had ever met. Richie was fucking fascinated.

"So what about her?"

"There's a stereotype in Hollywood about beautiful girls being gold diggers."

"You're just trying to find a nice way to call me ugly."

"You're not ugly," said Eddie, and for a second, Richie actually believed him. It was how he said it— like it was a fact, and Richie was an idiot. "You are disgustingly tall, though. Scooch down in your seat a little, will you?"

"Why?" Richie asked, already scooching.

"They might try to shoot you, and I'm in the way."

"You are *now*," said Richie, straightening back up. Something cracked. "Maybe I should drive?"

"You are not driving my limousine." Eddie shook his head. His hair looked so *soft*.

Richie had a devastating thought. If Eddie wasn't wearing a uniform, then he probably didn't have a matching cap.

"Oh, come on, it's already dented."

"That is not a reassuring affirmation of your driving ability."

"I'm from LA," said Richie. "I'm automatically a better driver than you."

Eddie looked like Richie had just insulted his mother. "I am a professional."

"In New York! No one drives in New York. There's too much traffic."

"That doesn't make any sense."

"Your face doesn't make any sense," said Richie, and for a second it didn't. Eddie looked almost fond. Sort of awestruck. The only person who looked at him like that was his Lobby Godbaby. "So what do we do now?"

Eddie shrugged, without taking his hands off the wheel. "Well, we could lead them to the police station, but they would take off. The license plate won't help since they obvious stole the cab. I texted 911, but the police found out it was you and mentioned something about a Pool Noodle Incident."

"Oh, yeah," said Richie. "I may have, uh, lived here for a while. Wow. New York cops have a longer memory than I would've thought. And life expectancy."

"I don't wanna' know," said Eddie.

"I don't want you to know," Richie assured him.

He sighed. "Well, at least they can't get away either. Until the cab shift change at 7:00 P.M."

"Is it almost 7:00 P.M.?" he asked. "Ah, man. I'm gonna' be so late."

"I thought you weren't in a hurry."

"I'm not, but my manager likes to confiscate awards when I'm late to pick them up."

"Do you have any Allinol?" asked Richie.

"Any what? That's not a drug. Is that a joke? Like I say, 'Allinol?' and you say, 'You're just another brick in the wall?'" asked Eddie, like a crazy person.

"No," said Richie, not at all like a crazy person. "It how they killed Rod Torque Redline in *Cars 2*."

"They— *What?*"

"They killed Rod Torque Redline with Allinol fuel. He made a 'your mother' joke, and a 'your sister' joke. In one joke. Car was a legend. Never mind. What about sugar?"

Eddie squinted, but he probably wasn't wondering if Richie's outfit had a matching cap (Bobby had confiscated it). "Sugar?"

"Yes, honey?" Richie batted his eyes. What was *wrong* with him? "Um, I could get out of the car and put sugar in their gas tank. You know. Like how they killed the car in *Justine*."

"That ending sucked," said Eddie. "They should have—"

"Crushed it!"

"—moved to another continent," he finished.

They looked at each other for a long moment, before Richie absolutely had to break the silence. Really, it was Eddie's fault for not

letting him blast talk radio.

"Guess we're not soulmates."

Eddie raised an eyebrow. Richie couldn't convey that much disdain with a whole set, let alone an eyebrow. "Because we didn't finish each other's sentences?"

Richie shrugged one shoulder. "Well, I was kind of hoping. On the off chance I die sprinkling these five packets of In the Raw— insert obligatory sex joke here— into a maniac's gas tank, I have a confession to make: Even if I had a girlfriend, she would be fake. I mean— I'm gay."

Richie had said it. Out loud. To one (probably) stranger, not TMZ, (although the stranger would probably out him on TMZ). But. It was like in cop shows, when the suspect gets caught outright or in interrogation, and he says, "At least I don't have to run anymore," except gay people didn't run.

"Some gay people run," said Eddie, which was when Richie realized that hadn't been in his head.

"That's just compulsive heterosexuality," said Richie.

"I'm not going to out you on TMZ," said Eddie.

"You're not?"

"TMZ doesn't care about B-Listers."

Richie pressed a hand to his chest. Mostly, he was being dramatic, but he was also surreptitiously checking his pulse. It could not be good for someone's heart to go that fast. This was exactly why he didn't run.

"You know sugar won't actually disable a car," said Eddie. "Not unless you have, like, a lot of it. More than five packets of— I'm not saying it."

"They were in your car."

"Here." He pressed something into Richie's hand. "Take the Smart Water."

Richie took the Smart Water. "Why?"

"Gas floats on water, so that bottle should be enough to flood the fuel pump."

"It's so sexy that you know that," said Richie. "Wish me luck."

"I should go." Eddie grimaced.

"What because you're short?"

"I'm average-height! You're just a..." He seemed to struggle for a moment. "Leggy Sasquatch."

"Ooh, new tour name." Richie popped the door, just enough to slip through, and dropped to the street. He knew Eddie's grimace had come from the thought of crawling, rather than the risk of imminent death, but, "I'm not letting you risk your life. A man has to take responsibility for his fake girlfriend."

Richie four-leg raced in between the idling cars until he reached the stolen cab. The silhouettes of three men were barely visible in the shadow of the surrounding skyscrapers. He opened the gas access door and dumped in the entire bottle of Smart Water. Feeling foolish and more than a little anticlimactic, Richie crawled back to the limo.

Eddie leaned over him to shut the passenger-side door, arm stretched out like a soccer mom.

"Done?"

"Done. Now what?"

"Play I Spy?" Eddie suggested dryly. "No. Shit. We should call the cops again. I'll just give them a fake name this time."

"If Mickey won't go to the Matterhorn, bring the Matterhorn to Mickey," said Richie.

"And an ambulance. I'm seriously concerned about the possibility of a concussion." Eddie reached for Richie's head and started checking for bumps, and Richie was really, *really* glad Bobby had confiscated the hat. "When they rammed us, for a minute, I... I thought you were dead."

"No, I get that a lot," said Richie. "That's just my face."

## 4. Chapter 4

It was like being stuck in an elevator... with a minibar and the most attractive man Richie had ever met. They did end up playing I Spy. It quickly devolved into Punch Buggy, and there were a lot more punches than buggies. The police still hadn't arrived by the time Richie called uncle.

After that, they played Twenty Questions, or Eddie asked twenty questions, and Richie played along.

"Have you ever thought about marriage?"

"Nah, man. I'm so deep in the closet the only guy I could marry is that nymph from Narnia. James McCavoy is hot, but he's not, like, marriage material."

Richie kept waiting for the panic attack to hit. He was short of breath, and his heart was beating so fast, it was like he had his own personal drum roll (something Richie had always dreamed of, actually), but it had nothing to do with adrenaline. He once researched the neurochemical effects of love (in a drunken attempt to replicate them with actual chemicals), and if he remembered correctly, it was dopamine, norepinephrine, and oxytocin turning his brain into an emotional Slip 'N Slide.

"No, I mean..." Eddie blushed. "Like a..."

"What? A beard?"

Eddie shrugged. The conversation seemed to make him more uncomfortable than their low-speed car chase, but he had introduced the topic. Richie was just shaking the topic's hand, and making awkward small talk with it.

"Nah, I can't pull off a beard." He joked. "Besides, I just couldn't do that to a woman. Even if she was in on it. I would feel guilty for— for holding her back, you know?"

Eddie smiled, but he didn't look happy about it.

"Eds?"

"Don't call me that." He sighed again. Either that, or he had asthma.

"Are you okay?" asked Richie. Maybe Eddie was having a panic attack. That was stupid. Why would—

"I'm married."

"Yeah, I noticed the ring," said Richie, because he was an idiot, and now Eddie would know he'd been checking for a—

"I'm gay," said Eddie. "I think. I didn't know. I guess it was, like, repression?" His voice had gone small and soft, but it wasn't as cute as it should have been, because it had also gone sad.

"Compulsive heterosexuality," said Richie. "It'll get you every time. Like running."

"Like..." At least he didn't look sad anymore, even if he did look mildly concerned for Richie's sanity. "Richie, gay people run. I run."

"Well, yeah, but you just admitted to being a victim of comphet," said Richie.

"I'm also a victim of gaslighting," said Eddie. He sounded surprised, and Richie wondered if he was usually less honest too.

"Is that like when you're a kid, and the local bully tries to set you on fire, because you're a 'flaming' gay?"

"Wh— No. Where did you grow up?"

"Derry," said Richie.

"Who?"

He laughed. "Not who. Where. I grew up in Derry, Maine. It's a small town, 'bout halfway between Bangor and Bucksport."

"So did I."

"Wait. What? Wait," said Richie. "What?"



"I grew up in Derry."

"Two seconds ago you thought I was talking about a person."

"I forgot."

"Lucky you," he said, but Eddie's doe-eyes had become impossibly bigger. "Hey, what's wrong? So a small town was forgettable. Hell, I couldn't have sworn to knowing its name until you asked. There's nothing scary about Derry, apart from Henry B—"

"—Bowers," Eddie finished.

Richie whistled. "Man, he got around."

"We must have gone to the same school. Why can't I remember you?" Eddie glared at him, as if it was Richie's fault for not being memorable enough.

He made the 'I dunno' noise. "I don't remember much of my childhood, but I just figured that was the drugs. Oh, quit looking at me like that. It was just weed. Oprah smokes weed."

"Does she?"

Richie made the noise again, but with extra emphasis on the uh. "Like, probably? Can you imagine how stressful it is to be Oprah? Celebrity's a fickle friend."

"How would you know?" Eddie was still glaring, eyes narrowed like looks could kill and he was focusing his scope.

"So if you were such a goody two-shoes, why don't you remember me?"

Eddie's look lost its focus but not its intensity. "My mom didn't let me out much. She told me I was sick. Gave me placebos." There was an unusual emphasis on 'placebos', like he'd said it so much the word had lost its meaning.

Richie frowned. "Like the Sixth Sense?"

"No, that's Munchhausen's by Proxy. My mom didn't actually make me sick."

"Mental health is important too," said Richie. "Or so I've been told."

Eddie's intensity focused back on him. Richie tried not to like it. "Are you okay?"

"I'm peachy," said Richie. "Haven't you ever heard of Millennial humor?"

"You're not a Millennial."

"Well..." Richie half-shrugged. "I'm okay enough."

It was supposed to be easier, admitting things to strangers, but not when you were famous, and anyway, Eddie didn't feel like a stranger. Everything about him was familiar, down to the furrow between his possibly sentient eyebrows.

"Do you still do weed?"

"Lookin' to score, Eds?" The furrow didn't go away, so Richie reached out a thumb to smooth it down.

"Don't call me that," said Eddie, but nothing about the thumb, which Richie had belatedly realized was pretty fucking creepy. So of course, he did it again. "There were rumors you did coke."

"Not for a while."

"Why?" asked Eddie.

"Why'd I quit or start?"

"Start."

"It just felt like there was this..."

"Hole," Eddie finished his sentence. "That nothing could fill."

"Yeah," Richie agreed. Then, "Insert obligatory sex joke."

"They're not actually obligatory, you know."

Eddie didn't feel like a stranger, but that did nothing to explain why his fingers encircling Richie's wrist felt like Wonder Woman's Lasso of Truth, and when had that happened?

Richie hadn't been this honest since his last for-stakes game of Truth or Dare, which... he couldn't actually remember. Not the truths, or the dares, or the other players. Just the stakes. Shower caps. They were playing for shower caps.

"Do you wanna' play Truth or Dare?" he asked Eddie.

"Okay," said Eddie, but his hand was still on Richie's chest, and when had that happened? "I'll go first. I pick dare."

"That sounds like a dare," said Richie.

"Well?" It was difficult to tell with such dark irises, but Eddie's pupils looked blown. "Are you chicken?"

"No," Richie lied. Tin cans on a string could have picked up the signals Eddie was giving off, but Richie's brain was a news ticker of: It's dark in the limo. He was reaching for the door again. He was just being polite. Limo drivers were trained in etiquette, right? Not just insanely sexy action movie stunt driving.

"I am," said Eddie. "All the time. About everything. Germs, small talk, speeches, eye contact, viruses, driving, flying, being sung to, doors that aren't explicitly labeled Push or Pull. But not about you."

"I dare you to kiss me," said Richie.

Eddie smiled like he was proud, and that smile was still on his lips when he pressed them to Richie's. It was perfect. Richie's third shrink kept telling him that perfection was just a way to ruin something good, but she had obviously never met Eddie—

"Kaspbrak!"

The word was muffled, but Eddie did the sensible thing and stopped kissing him before speaking.

"What?"

"You're Eddie Kaspbrak. Eds. You're Eds. You wore two fanny packs, and your mother was Sonia Kaspbrak, or maybe Jabba the Hutt. That part's still a little fuzzy. Oh! Oh! You called them gazebos!"

"You do know me!" Eddie pointed at him, all j'accuse.

"I've loved you forever," said Richie. "Except for a thirty year period where I never thought about you."

"Oh..." Eddie pressed his palm harder to Richie's chest, as if deciphering the morse code of his heartbeats. "Beep, beep, Richie."

This time, Richie kissed him.

## 5. Chapter 5

Half an hour later, Richie was sitting in the back of a cop car, trying to convince Eddie that he didn't need a doctor. He was mostly sure Eddie meant a medical doctor.

"Richie, if you have a concussion—"

"I'll not sleep it off. You act like this is the first time I've been hit in the head."

Eddie pursed his lips in a way that much more kissable than likely intended.

Someone rapped on the windshield. Detective Willoughby lowered the window.

"What?"

"It's uh... Richie Tozier's manager?" Officer... Doyon didn't look old enough to know who Richie was, let alone talk to his manager. "On the... phone?"

"What did I tell you to say if anyone other than the Sarge called?"

"I'm sorry, sir. He wouldn't take fuck off for an answer."

Richie could have told them that.

Officer Doyon was still talking. "Apparently, they panicked at the awards show and played a CD from his dressing room labelled 'Compilation.' It was... not what they thought it was."

"Oh, well, I guess I'm out now," said Richie, and there was the panic attack.

"Breathe," Eddie told him. To Officer Doyon, he said, "You, stop talking."

Officer Doyon nodded emphatically and left to process the fake-girlfriend-nappers. It turned out Eddie was right about the MO, but

wrong about the Grand Theft Auto. The cab wasn't stolen. Its owners were just really feeling Uber's effect on the taxi industry. They had apologized to Eddie, who they considered one of their own.

Willoughby rubbed his forehead. "If you aren't going to the hospital, I think you should go home. This is about to become a circus. We're going to take your vehicle, but Officer Billows will give you a Property/Evidence Receipt and a ride home."

Officer Billows was older than Officer Doyon. He didn't give a fuck that his passenger was a recently-outed, (but still In Style) comedian and his... Eddie.

"Are you okay?" asked Eddie. This time, instead of putting his hand on Richie's chest, he picked up Richie's hand and put it on his chest. Richie was pretty sure it was about synchronizing his breath, but mostly it was just distracting. So it did kind of help with the panic attack.

"No harm done," he said. "It's not like this is the first time someone had tried to kill me. I mean, I make a lot of bad jokes."

"Yeah, and that was one of 'em."

"Do you need to home?" Richie asked. "You didn't give him a second address."

"I texted Myra." Eddie said, enigmatically.

"You didn't divorce her by text, did you?" he asked.

Eddie rolled his eyes. "No, asshole. I'll tell her tomorrow morning. So it won't really matter if she's mad about tonight."

"Oh," Richie hadn't actually expected him to...

"Idiot," Eddie said fondly. Then, "But no sex. You have a concussion, and I'm still married."

"Okay," said Richie, who was feeling pretty agreeable.

"If you talk about this in your next Netflix special, can you mention

me?" asked Officer Billows, so maybe he gave a little fuck.

"Okay," he said again. "In exchange for a full pardon for the Pool Noodle Incident."

"Done," said Officer Billows.

They spat and shook on it, but Eddie made them wait till Officer Billows parked the car. Officer Doyon.

"Do you have a guest room."

"If I saw no, can we sleep together?" asked Richie.

"No sex." Eddie held up a warning finger.

Richie shook it. "Done."

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Officer Billows was older than Officer Doyon. He obviously didn't give a fuck that his passenger was a recently-outed (but still In Style) comedian and his... Eddie.

"Are you okay?" asked Eddie. This time, instead of putting his hand on Richie's chest, he picked up Richie's hand and put it on his own chest. Richie was pretty sure it was about synchronizing breaths, but mostly it was just distracting. Either way, it helped with the anxiety.

That was a trick Richie's third— fourth shrink had taught him. (Third had been: Breathe in through your mouth and out through your Cuban cigar.) A grounding technique. Find five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

He wondered what Eddie tasted like.

"I'm fine," he said. "It's not like this is the first time someone has tried to kill me. I mean, I make a lot of bad jokes."

"Yeah, and that was one of them."

"See?" said Richie.

"I texted my wife," said Eddie.

Richie was surprised by the non-sequitur, even though non-sequiturs were his first language. "You didn't divorce her by text, did you?"

Eddie rolled his eyes. "No, asshole. I'll tell her tomorrow morning. So it won't really matter if she's mad about tonight."

"Oh," Richie hadn't actually expected him to...

"Idiot," Eddie said fondly. Then, "But no sex. You have a concussion, and I'm still married."

"Okay," said Richie, who was feeling pretty agreeable.

"If you talk about this in your next Netflix special, can you mention me?" asked Officer Billows, so maybe he gave a little fuck.

"Okay," he said again. "In exchange for a full pardon for the Pool Noodle Incident."

"Done," said Officer Billows.

"I don't want to know," said Eddie.

They shook on it, but Eddie made them wait till the car was parked, and he wouldn't let them spit on their hands first.

The hotel was cheap, not because he couldn't afford better, but because he didn't have standards. The room was a single. At least it was clean. Despite... everything about him, Richie had always kept his space clean. For some reason.

"I can take the couch."

Eddie looked at him like crazy, which was fair. "There isn't a couch."

"Oh, yeah."

"Tell me the bed is at least a double."

"Queen," said Richie.

"Well, we've shared a hammock," said Eddie. "I think I can live with a queen."

"Promise?"

"God." Eddie huffed a laugh. "You can finally tell gay jokes. You're going to be such a pain in the a— No, don't! Don't you fucking dare!"

Richie just smiled. He couldn't remember ever smiling this much, except that he finally could.

Eddie set an alarm on his phone to wake them up every two hours for a concussion check. Richie guessed his passcode and changed the alarm to play, "Anaconda."

Eddie began removing his black pants and white button-up shirt, surprisingly unselfconscious for, well, him. Richie followed his lead (he always had, he always would) and they climbed into bed together wearing only their boxers. They rolled over to face each other.

"How the fuck are you so ripped?" Richie whispered. "Oh, my god, you're like Captain America if he got the serum, but just stayed really tiny."

"I guess we know who the nerd in this relationship is," said Eddie, and Richie felt like he was high on cocaine without the... everything about cocaine.

"That's what the hets want to know," said Richie. "Who's the nerd in the relationship and who's the jock."

"I'm not a jock," said Eddie.

"Yes, you are." Richie made his voice solemn. "Just like Harry Potter."

"You fucking nerd."

"See? Now you're a bully too."

Eddie's voice was actually solemn when he said. "Do you feel like we're still forgetting something? About... bullies?"

"Bowers?"

"Not Bowers." Eddie shook his head against the pillow. "Worse."

Richie couldn't imagine a bully worse than Bowers. "I feel like we're forgetting something. Someone? I don't know."

"We'll figure it out. We can... talk to your parents, or go through our old stuff, or something."

"I get the feeling we won't need to."

"What do you mean?"

When Richie didn't answer, Eddie reached for him. His arm. Shoulder. Back. Stomach. The touches were light, hesitant in a way Little Eddie's touches had never been, but then again Little Eddie had never touched his nipples. He didn't take it any further than that, and that was accompanied by a blush so bright Richie thought he would start a fire. Eddie linked their hands, and he looked for sparks.

Between the concussion and the proximity to Eddie, something had gotten knocked loose in Richie's skull. He just hoped it wasn't part of his actual skull.

"I love you," he said, and before he could take it back, make it a joke, even breathe, Eddie said, "I love you too."

## 7. Epilogue

Officer Billows is disappointed with limited role in Richie Tozier's latest Netflix special, "The Leggy Sasquatch Tour," and promises to reveal all about "Pool Noodle Incident."

#Trashmouth cast in upcoming horror adaptation #The Sit  
@wdenborough @rtozier

Costumes for #The Sit to be provided by upcoming fashion giant  
#Marsh/Rogan @beverlymarsh @marshrogan @wdenborough

Architect Ben Hanscom's newest building will be set for #The Sit  
@bhanscom

Breaking News: Richie "Trashmouth" Tozier NOT cast as "The Trashman" in upcoming horror film The Sit. Fans ask: Can Marsh/Rogan make Richie Tozier look like a private school teacher?

The Internet has Finally Realized Richie Tozier is Hot and is Losing Its Collective Mind

Richie "Trashmouth" Tozier rumored involvement in "The Sit" alternate ending: "We don't bury our gays in this house. We leave them lying around until they start to smell."

Trending

Richie Tozier @rtozier

240K Tweets

#WeStandwithBeverlyMarsh

32K Tweets

#GayTrash

#4,573 Tweets

BeverlyMarsh @beverlymarsh

152K Tweets

#DoxTomRogan

730 Tweets

#TheSit

380K Tweets

#LetsBuyRichieTozierSomeNewClothes

12K Tweets

#PoolNoodleIncident

490K Tweets

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Maturin was the turtle god of the Macroverse. He slept within his shell, rarely coming out. Once, Maturin came out of his shell, because he had to vomit. His vomit was the known universe.

The Macroverse is similar to human multiverse theory, but there isn't one universe for every reality. There's just one universe, and it contains every reality.

In most of these realities, Mike Hanlon calls the Losers.

In this one, the Losers call him.

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"Hey, is this Mike Hanlon?"

"Speaking."

"Is your husband running for Congress?"

"I— What?"

"Then you better catch him."

"...Richie?"

"Stan, actually. Richie threatened to tell my wife about the shower caps. I guess it's time, huh?"

"How—"

"We'll explain when we get there. Make us some reservations, will you? Anything but Chinese. Eddie can eat cashews now, but I just... don't like fortune cookies. You know, they actually had fortunes once. You will meet a tall, dark, handsome stranger. That kind of thing."

"Don't worry! I'm sure you'll find him someday! Hi, Mike!"

"Get off the other line, Tozier! Anyway, now they all sound like Tweets."

"That's not true. One time, I got a fortune that just said, 'Duck.'"

"That was the receipt, dumbass."

"That does make more sense."

"...How does Mexican sound?"

"Sounds great, Mike. We'll see you soon."